# PRESS RELEASE
## Congressman John Conyers, Jr.

**Fourteenth District, Michigan**
**Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary**
**Dean, Congressional Black Caucus**

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### CONYERS RE-INTRODUCES THE OMNIBUS "FIX '96" IMMIGRATION BILL

Today, Congressman John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee joined members from Congressional Hispanic, Black and Asian Pacific Caucuses and over 60 immigration and advocacy groups, including the National Council of La Raza, American Immigration Lawyers Association, Immigration and Refugee Services of America, National Immigration Forum, American Civil Liberties Union, NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund to re-introduce the Restoration of Fairness in Immigration Law Act of 2000.

Conyers issued the following statement regarding the legislation:

"We are here today to announce the introduction of the "Restoration of Fairness in Immigration Law Act of 2000," a bipartisan bill that is supported by the leaders of the Congressional Hispanic, Black and Asian Pacific Caucuses as well as over 60 immigration advocacy groups.

Since this nation's founding, more than 55 million immigrants from every continent have settled in the United States. Immigrants work hard to make ends meet and pay taxes every day. They have lived in this country for decades, married U.S. citizens, and raised their U.S.-citizen children. Laws that single these people out for no other reason than their status as immigrants violate their fundamental right to fair treatment.

Yet, for too many years, Congress has witnessed a wave of anti-immigrant legislation, playing on our worst fears and prejudices. Since 1994, we have considered proposals to ban birthright citizenship, ban bilingual ballots, and slash family and employment based immigration, as well as to limit the number of asylees and refugees. In 1996 we passed laws denying legal residents the right to public benefits and denying immigrants a range of due process and fairness protections.

Recently we have seen the tragedy of September 11th used as an excuse for even more assaults on the rights of immigrants. The Justice Department is now holding deportation hearings in secret and detaining immigrants even after they are ordered released. The Attorney General is reducing both the independence and number of judges that handle the appeals of immigration cases. We are fending off legislation almost daily intended to reduce if not eliminate immigration to this country.

Those who urge us to restrict the due process rights of immigrants forget the reason these rights were established in the first place. We grant due process rights to citizens and non-citizens alike; not out of some soft-hearted sentimentality, but because we believe that these rights form an important cornerstone to maintaining civilized society.

The "Restoration of Fairness in Immigration Act of 2002" furthers this proud legacy by restoring our nation's long standing compassion for individuals seeking to build a better life and reunite with their families.

The bill restores fairness to the immigration process by making sure that each person has a chance to have their case heard by a fair and impartial decision maker. No one here is looking to give immigrants a free ride, just a fair chance.

Our work will not stop with the introduction of this legislation. While this bill lays the benchmark for future Congresses of what our immigration policy should be, I believe that many provisions of this bill can be passed into law, including the restoration of section 245(i), Congressman Frank's Family Reunification Act and Senator Kennedy's Immigrant Fairness Restoration Act.

To the extent that these provisions and the rest of our bill are not enacted, if I am elected as Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee in the fall, I pledge to you today to bring this legislation up as the first major piece of legislation that we consider in the next Congress.

Justice and fairness, as well as our own economic interests, demand no less."

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